

Gender Equality in the Fields of English, Chemistry and Physics

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Today women can be seen running Fortune 500 companies such as General Motors, HP, and IBM which all currently have women CEOs. In addition, women are usually revered and respected for their contributions to the communities in which they live. However, in the past a woman would not be given a chance to run a company, let alone even have her opinion heard. While women today can be seen as leaders in the free-world, women professors here at Lake Forest College can be seen in all departments and many are the heads of departments. Specifically looking at the departments of English, Chemistry, and Politics women faculty all generally agreed that they are valued and respected for their opinions. However, all professors interviewed also made mention that there is still a large difference between the way women and men are treated and that the gaps between genders have not been fully closed. Even though some fields may appear to be more women friendly or women dominated there are still discrepancies between genders no matter the department at LFC. English has typically been seen as a female field that attracts many women, at LFC the faculty is surprisingly more male dominated. Professor Carla Arnell feels that while the field is women friendly there are still some unspoken inequalities. For example, she pointed out that when it comes to taking care of children there is a much larger difference for men and women. Specifically, if a man brings his child into the work place he is considered as being a good father. However, if a woman brings a child people wonder why she could not find a babysitter. Women are required to have a better separation between work and family than men. In addition, she feels that while her field may have more flexibility than that of a doctor or lawyer, there is still a large workload. Especially with the amount of papers that need to be graded. In contrast, Chemistry has always been seen as a very male dominated field. Professor Dawn Wiser agrees with this statement however, she also says that she has had unique experiences as, except for her post doc work in industry, there were always many other women around her. While there are many more men in the general field of chemistry, the department at LFC does have many more women than men. In addition, Professor Wiser feels that when she chose to work at LFC seeing all the women around her most likely subconsciously helped with her choice. However, she does say that there is definitely a lot further to go in the ways of women's rights and she specifically points out the pay gap that still exists. In the social sciences, politics has never been specifically viewed as male or female dominated. However, Professor Moroney points out that there are subfields of politics that are definitely male dominated, such as those that study war. Furthermore, she claims that when she was in school there were classes known to only have one woman in them. However, today this is not true and the field is very diverse. In the community though she feels that there are differences based on the institution and the LFC community is extremely diverse. She also made a point of reference that at an old job of hers

they did not have a maternity leave policy, and that when a woman had a baby she would have to take disability leave. Throughout various fields of study, women have a greater voice than what they used to be given. While many discrepancies can be found between the two genders, such as taking care of kids and the pay gap, women are still given more respect than what they used to have and are valued for their opinions. Here at LFC various women professors from different fields expressed their thoughts on the gender gap on campus. While all feel that there is no obvious discrimination, they did feel that there are still changes that could be made to improve LFC, although no specific examples were given. One day then, there will hopefully be complete gender equality. I would like to acknowledge Professor Arnell, Professor Wiser, and Professor Moroney for their time and contributions to this article.

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